

THE ASSOCIATION OF THE BAR
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
42 WEST 44TH STREET
NEW YORK 10036

MERRELL E. CLARK, JR.
PRESIDENT
40 WALL STREET
NEW YORK 10008

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March 3, 1980

The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Earlier this week we received a copy of the State Department's report on human rights in Argentina, which was prepared in accordance with Section 502(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act. The report presents a seemingly balanced and detailed account of the very disturbing situation in Argentina. Drawing considerably from the Report of the Association's Mission of Lawyers to Argentina last April, it underscores the need for the U.S. and the international community to continue to investigate and speak out with regard to the ongoing violations of human rights occurring in that country.

The State Department report was released several weeks after news articles first suggested that the Government of Argentina now is seeking to soften U.S. emphasis on human rights in Argentina in exchange for Argentina's agreement to discontinue wheat sales to the Soviet Union. Whether or not these reports are true, it continues to be imperative for the U.S. to maintain its commitment to the promotion of human rights and to the return to the rule of law in Argentina.

The State Department report notes some positive changes in the past year, such as a decline in the number of disappearances. However, the report also emphasizes the continued need for improved protection of individual rights, and incorporates several of the recommendations made by our Mission:

"The [Mission's] report recommends the removal of all detainees from executive detention, new trials for those convicted in military courts, an accounting for the disappeared, the termination of restrictions on the exercise of the right of option (See Section 3b) and the reestablishment of the rule of law and constitutional guarantees." [Emphasis added]

-- "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1979",
February 4, 1980, at page 243.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release (☐) Excise (☐) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: (☐) In Part (☐) In Full

(☐) Classify as (☐) Extend as (☐) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

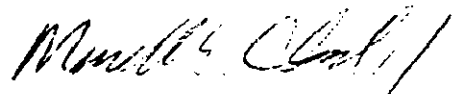
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To date there has been little meaningful progress in any of these areas.

Considering the continued severity of the situation, and the unique role of the U.S. in encouraging advances in human rights, we urge the United States to continue to take appropriate measures to carry out a strong human rights policy.

In particular we note that the United Nations Human Rights Commission, which is now meeting in Geneva, will consider Argentina both in the context of a general debate on disappearances, and in its confidential procedures under ECOSOC Resolution 1503. Last summer we endorsed a Report filed under the 1503 procedures by the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights. In the Commission's debate on that Report, we urge the U.S. to support strong U.N. action, leading to a thorough investigation of the current human rights situation in Argentina.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Merrell E. Clark, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Merrell E. Clark, Jr.